

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL
COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lara Kritzer, JM Goldson
community preservation + planning

Organization: Hanson Historical Commission

Date (month / year): June 2018

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form
Number

112-0-15A-0

Hanover

HNS.258

Town/City: Hanson

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Address: 499 State Street

Historic Name: John and Hannah Ramsdell
House

Uses: Present: Single-Family
Residential
Original: Single-Family Residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1784

Source: White's History, Plan 5 No. 66, Page
92, Massachusetts Marriage Records

Style/Form: Half-Cape

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone

Wall/Trim: Wood Shingle/Wood

Roof: Wood Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Wood sided garden sheds to northwest and
southwest of house, granite bollards along east
property line

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Additions
to north facade

Condition: Good

Moved: no ☒ **yes** ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.98 Acres

Setting: Located on a winding road through a
residential neighborhood of medium sized single
family homes centered on large, open lots which
are surrounded by dense vegetation and mature
trees.

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☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The narrow one-and-a-half story Half-Cape house has a wood shingled gable roof with a square, corbeled brick chimney near the north end of the roof ridge. The house is located on a flat lot in close proximity to the street and is one of only two such houses documented during this survey. The original house has a square footprint which has been extended to the north under two lower, one-story additions at the center of that façade. While the Assessor's map and aerial views of the property show a cross gable addition to the west façade, this is not visible from the public way and only the changes to the north façade have been recorded here. The house is wood shingle sided with wood trim and twelve-over-twelve double hung wood windows. The roof extends beyond the gable façades just far enough to accommodate a band of wood trim at the eaves but ends flush with the gable-end facades where a narrow band of trim outlines the pediment, extending out beyond the façade at each end. Wood shutters also surround the windows on the east façade of the house.

The house faces east and has a narrow original front façade that is just over half the width of a typical Cape in this area. Half-Cape buildings were once the common starter home for early colonial families and were generally expanded over time into traditional Cape style homes. Two double hung windows are located just below the eaves to the left of the entrance, which is located in the northeast corner of the façade. The entrance has a wide, flat band of wood trim above and to either side of the door frame. A solid wood panel door is located at the center of the frame with long, narrow sidelights over low panels to either side. On the south façade, a small rectangular vent is located at the top of the pediment over two double hung windows in the gable-end and a window is located in each corner of the first floor. On the north gable-end façade, the one-story addition is set back from the northeast corner of the building and positioned over the northwest half of the façade. A single double hung window remains in the gable-end above. Two double hung windows are located on the east façade of this addition, which has the same wood shingled roof, wood trimmed eaves, and wood shingled siding seen on the original house. This first addition is approximately the same length as the original house as well. The second addition extends across most of the first addition's north façade but is set in and down about a foot to separate the two structures. This addition is hidden behind mature evergreen trees surrounding its east and north facades and is nearly invisible from the public way.

Although located close to the street on a flat lot, the house can be difficult to see due to the surrounding vegetation. A line of stone bollards runs along the east property line and has a garden and planting area with ornamental and evergreen bushes located running between the house and the bollards, with a small patch of grass lawn at the center. The north half of the site is surrounded by dense trees and heavy vegetation and a small, wood shingled gable roofed shed is also located at the northern end of the yard. A wide asphalt paved driveway runs from the southeast corner of the house to the south property line. A row of bushes and plantings separates the driveway from the yard to the west and southwest of the house, where a small wood board sided shed is located. Dense vegetation and mature trees are also located along the south and west property lines.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Continuation sheet 3

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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White's History of Hanson labeled this house as 494 State Street and explained that it had been built around 1775. It is not clear from White, though, who built the house. By 1830, the property was in the hands of John Ramsdell (1756-1831) the son of Samuel and Dorothy Ramsdell, and it is possible that John either built the house himself or inherited the house from his family, as there were numerous Ramsdells living in the Pembroke and Hanover area in the late 1700s. John was a private in the Revolutionary War and married Hannah Allen of Pembroke in 1784. The house may date to his marriage in 1784 and first appears under John Ramsdell's ownership on the 1830 Smith Plan of Hanson. John Ramsdell also appears on the 1790-1830 U.S. Censuses of Pembroke and Hanson under Ramsdell, Ramsdelle, and Ramsdall.

In 1833, Luther Chapman purchased the property from Bartlett Ramsdell, who had received it from John Ramsdell.¹ Luther Chapman (1805-1880) had married John and Hannah's daughter, Huldah (also Huldah) Allen Ramsdell (1808-1872), in 1826. Although listed on the marriage documents as being "of Boston," he was born in New Hampshire and went on to work as a farmer and carpenter after his marriage. Luther and Huldah had two sons - Henry W. Chapman (b. 1827) and Luther Warner Chapman (1833-1920). Luther Jr. was a shoemaker and married Josephine Underwood in 1873. After his father's death, Luther W. purchased his brother's interest in the family home.² Luther's shoe shop was located directly across State Street from the house as shown in the 1879 Walker Atlas, which lists the house as belonging to "L. Chatham." The property at the time extended to the corner of State Street and East Washington Street, which was then known as Chapman's Corner. The 1903 Richards Atlas shows the house with an addition to its northwest corner and lists it as belonging to "L.W. Chapman." While the shoe shop is no longer listed here, two additional properties on the east side of State Street are also listed as belonging to L.W. Chapman.

After Luther and Josephine's deaths, the property was inherited by their son, Sumner Allen Chapman (1874-1950). A lawyer, Sumner had married Bertha May Briggs in Plymouth in 1909, where the couple lived throughout their marriage. Sumner passed the property on to his own children, Sumner Jr., Annette J., and John C. Chapman, who eventually sold the property in 1958 to Edwin L. and Bruce B. Roberts.³

After remaining within the same family for nearly two hundred years, the property changed hands comparatively often in the second half of the twentieth century. The house was sold again in 1961 to Peter A and Sylvia Milne, who sold it 1965 to Susan and John Webster III in 1965.⁴ Susan Webster continues to own and reside in the house today.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Brown, Donna McCulloch. *Images of America: Hanson*. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2003.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts State Census, 1855 and 1865. Located in Local History Room, Hanson Public Library and www.ancestry.com

Gurney, E.B.K., "History of Hanson," in D.H. Hurd, *History of Plymouth County, Massachusetts* (Philadelphia, 1884), p. 340-355. Available at www.archive.org/details/historyofplymout02hurd/page/340

Hanson Historical Commission. *History of Town of Hanson*. March 2, 1959. (Typescript) Project of Historical Commission and Board of Selectmen approved by vote of Town Meeting. <https://archive.org/details/historyoftownofh00sn>

Massachusetts Birth, Marriage and Death Records. www.ancestry.com

¹ Plymouth County Registry of Deeds, Book 176, Page 126

² Plymouth County Registry of Deeds, Book 462, Page 52

³ Plymouth County Registry of Deeds, Book 2625, Page 62

⁴ Plymouth County Registry of Deeds, Book 2897, Page 445; 3264, Page 630

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Obituaries, Burial information, and Family Trees, www.findagrave.com

Richards, L.J. *New Topographic Atlas of Plymouth County and Cohasset Town*, 1903. Town of Hanson, Plate 16. www.historicmapworks.com/Map/US/9831/Hanson+Town++Pembroke+Town/Plymouth+County+and+Cohasset+Town+1903/Massachusetts/

Smith, J. Plan of Hanson. 1830. <https://usgenwebhansonma.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/1830hansonmap.jpg>

Town of Hanson Assessor's database and property record cards, www.assessedvalues2.com/index.aspx?jurcode=123

Town of Hanson Assessor's Records on Persons and Property, 1941-1970. Local History Room, Hanson Public Library.

U.S. Census information, www.ancestry.com

Walker, George H. *Atlas of Plymouth County, Mass.* 1879. Map of the Town of Hanson at www.historicmapworks.com/Map/US/8999/Hanson+Town/Plymouth+County+1879/Massachusetts/,

Walling, Henry Francis. *Map of town of Hanson, Plymouth County, Mass. 1856.* (New York, 1857). www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:1257bd15g

White, Joseph B. *White's History of Hanson, MA.* 1932. Annotated manuscript compiled between 1908-1932 and revised by Allan Clemons, 2014. Binder copy located in the Local History Room, Hanson Public Library.

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- ☒ Individually eligible ☐ Eligible **only** in a historic district
☐ Contributing to a potential historic district ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ **A** ☐ **B** ☒ **C** ☐ **D**

Criteria Considerations: ☐ **A** ☐ **B** ☐ **C** ☐ **D** ☐ **E** ☐ **F** ☐ **G**

Statement of Significance by Lara Kritzer

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The ca. 1795 Cape style house is eligible for individual listing on the National Register under Criteria A for its association with the early settlement of Plymouth County and Massachusetts

Continuation sheet 5

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as well as the development of Hanson as a separate town. The house is also eligible under Criteria C as it has survived in its original location with both its setting and original architectural character intact despite two centuries of use. The house embodies the distinctive character and architectural features of its late eighteenth century architectural design and construction and illustrates how these homes were expanded and adapted over time to meet the changing needs of their residents. Additional information on the building's interior will also be needed for the Massachusetts Historical Commission to substantiate its National Register eligibility.